

8 OCT 1974

IC 74-2065

5X1 [redacted] USA  
Director, Defense Intelligence Agency  
Washington, D. C. 20310

Dear Danny:

Before leaving on his trip, Mr. Colby asked me to respond to Vince's letter of 29 August and to bring you up to date on where we stand on the "uncertainties" matter. As one of the first steps, we are going to focus on some of the more critical judgments in NIE 11-3/8-74 and try to fully lay out our uncertainties in the clearest possible manner. Some of the things that will be given a critical look are ICBM accuracies, RV weights and their related yields, and SLBM accuracies. Other matters will, of course, be given the same treatment if it becomes clear that they are critical in determining the likely utility of a weapon system.

I feel that this NIE is a good one with which to begin the process, and I also feel that many of the steps taken and lessons learned will be applicable to other products of a similar nature.

Sincerely,

RECEIVED  
Samuel V. Wilson  
Lieutenant General, USA  
Deputy to the DCI for the  
Intelligence Community

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IC/PRD: [redacted] (retyped 8 Oct 74)

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IC-74-2013

374

Vice Admiral V. P. de Poix, USN  
Director, Defense Intelligence Agency  
Room 3E258  
The Pentagon

Dear Vince:

Earlier this month Mr. Colby sent you a letter responding to your request that we attempt to somehow better quantify intelligence uncertainties. I have given the matter some further thought and I feel that one of the first steps that should be taken is to poll our primary users of military estimates, i.e., the DOD and the NSC, to find out in which particular areas we should try to quantify our uncertainties to the greatest degree of specificity. For example, I doubt that it would be as important to them for us to try to quantify our uncertainty regarding the maximum operational altitude of the SA-2 to the nth degree as it would be for us to try to do so on the CEP of the SS-X-19. In other words, I am confident that quantifying our degree of uncertainty is vastly more important in some areas than in others. Rather than trying to quantify our uncertainties in judgments across the board, we should find out what is critical and focus on those particular matters.

Sincerely,

Daniel O. Graham  
Lieutenant General, USA  
Deputy to the DCI for the  
Intelligence Community

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DCI/IC 74-1494

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Vice Admiral V. P. de Poix, USN  
Director, Defense Intelligence Agency  
Room 3E258  
The Pentagon

Dear Vince:

I am quite in sympathy with your views concerning how we can best quantify our uncertainties in the various judgments set forth in our many publications. This is a problem that has plagued the producers of intelligence for many, many years. I am not sure that it is one that can be completely resolved but, at least in certain critical areas, I believe that some constructive steps can be taken.

I propose that, for a start, we ask the community's producers of scientific and technical intelligence to see if they can develop some better means of expressing uncertainty on specific issues which are likely to have an especially significant impact on major questions of the day. For example, our uncertainties concerning the accuracy of a given ICBM and the weight and yield of its warhead(s) are clearly considerations which our consumers should take into account when they seek to assess the utility of that weapon against a Minuteman silo.

I believe that, initially, we should avoid setting up a new mechanism to take on a task much broader in scope. If you agree, I will broach the subject at a USIB meeting in the near future and ask the appropriate USIB Committees to see what they can do along these lines. We might ask the IC Staff to track the steps actually taken or needed, and suggest to us any specific areas appropriate for the type of intensive study you suggested. Meanwhile, I would certainly agree that DIA take a leading role in the areas you have worked on. It may be that whatever advances can be made will prove beneficial in guiding us in areas other than the scientific and technical fields.

Sincerely,

W. E. Colby

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*Production*  
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8 AUG 1974

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Sincerely,

/s/ DIII

W. E. Colby

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ICS/PRD/TB: [ ] (2 August 1974)

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THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20505

Vice Admiral V. P. de Poix, USN  
Director, Defense Intelligence Agency  
Room 3E258  
The Pentagon

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*Meaning I would certainly agree that DIA take a leading role in the areas you have worked on.*  
W. E. Colby

*We might ask the IC Staff to track the steps actually taken or needed, and suggest to us any specific areas appropriate for the types of intensive study you suggested.*

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DCI/IC-74-1494

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Vice Admiral V. P. de Poix, USN  
Director, Defense Intelligence Agency  
Room 3E258  
The Pentagon

Dear Vince:

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Sincerely,

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W. E. Colby

ICS/PRD/TB: [redacted] (23 July 1974)

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DCI/IC 741693

12 July 1974

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MEMORANDUM FOR:

THROUGH :

SUBJECT : Uncertainties in Intelligence

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1. Prior to his departure on emergency leave, [redacted] VADM De Poix's proposal with the NIO for Strategic Programs. Since that time, I have solicited the views of other people on the IC Staff. It appears that everyone is generally of the same mind, with Mr. Stoertz the most adamant, that it would be unwise to get wrapped up in any such effort.

2. The problems associated with conveying uncertainty are inherent in the intelligence process. A principal reason, of course, is that "uncertainty" cannot be separated from the substance of the data at hand. A more precise delineation of uncertainty requires more confidence in the available data, which, in turn, means that the substantive issue itself has been more clearly understood.

3. Mr. Stoertz concurs that the presentation of uncertainties is a continuing problem. He points out, however, that this problem is repeatedly being addressed by the community each time an estimate or position paper is developed on any given issue. Further, he is emphatic that this problem should be handled within the NIO structure and not by the creation of yet another bureaucratic study group.

4. If you agree there is little merit in the DIA proposal, we recommend a low-key, perhaps verbal, response by the DCI to dissuade the Admiral.

Attachment: Proposal  
Distribution:

Original - Addressee, w/att

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Remarks:

Please review and provide recommendations to DCI.

Executive Secretary  
25 June 1974

Date

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Remarks:

Executive Secretary

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